

## Lesson 1

# Character

A **character** is a person in a story or play. Each character has certain qualities, or **traits**, that the reader discovers as the events unfold. A character's words and actions usually show these traits. Sometimes an author states the character's traits directly. Another character in a story can also tell the reader what a character is like. **Motivation** is a feeling, idea, or goal that causes a character to act in a certain way.



### Tips for Success

- Look for adjectives that tell what a character is like.
- Decide what a character's words or actions say about him or her.
- Notice how events cause a character to act during a story.

In this passage from *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery, the main character, an orphan named Anne, is driving to her new home in a horse and carriage. As you read, think about Anne's character traits.

She came out of her reverie with a deep sigh and looked at him with the dreamy gaze of a soul that had been wondering afar, star-led.

"Oh, Mr. Cuthbert," she whispered, "that place we came through—that white place—what was it?"

"Well now, you must mean the Avenue," said Matthew after a few moments' profound reflection. "It is a kind of pretty place."

"Pretty? Oh, *pretty* doesn't seem the right word to use. Nor beautiful, either. They don't go far enough. Oh, it was wonderful—wonderful. It's the first thing I ever saw that couldn't be improved upon by imagination . . ."

". . . But they shouldn't call that lovely place the Avenue. There is no meaning in a name like that. They should call it—let me see—the White Way of Delight. Isn't that a nice imaginative name? When I don't like the name of a place or a person I always imagine a new one and always think of them so. There was a girl at the asylum whose name was Hepzibah Jenkins, but I always imagined her as Rosalia DeVere. . ."

1. Based on this passage, which statement BEST describes Anne?

- A. She is anxious to impress adults.
- B. She is unable to accept the ugliness that is part of reality.
- C. Her deep feelings for beauty and romance inspire her.
- D. She is very impractical and lives in a dream world.

1. (A) (B) (C) (D)



Mark your answer choice by filling in the oval.

Now check to see whether you chose the correct answer.

- A. The details in this passage do not suggest this about Anne.
- B. Although Anne is moved by beauty, readers don't know whether or not she can accept the ugly parts of reality.
- C. This is the correct answer. Anne is romantic and deeply moved by beauty.
- D. While Anne tends to be dreamy, readers don't know that she is impractical.



### Test Practice

As you read this passage, think about the characters' traits and motivations.

When little Nephew Tatsuo came to live with us he liked to do everything the adults were doing in the nursery, and although his little mind did not know it, everything he did was opposite of adult conduct, unknowingly destructive and disturbing. So Uncle Hiroshi after witnessing several weeks of rampage said, "This has got to stop, this sawing the side of a barn and nailing the doors to see if it would open. But we must not whip him. We must not crush his curiosity by any means."

And when Nephew Tatsuo, who was seven and in high second grade, got used to the place and began coming out into the fields and pestering us with difficult questions as "What are the plants here for? What is water? Why are the bugs made for? What are the birds and why do the birds sing?" and so on, I said to Uncle Hiroshi, "We must do something about this. We cannot answer questions all the time and we cannot be correct all the time and so we will do

harm. But something must be done about this beyond a doubt."

"Let us take him in our hands," Uncle Hiroshi said.

So Hiroshi took little Nephew Tatsuo aside, and brought him out in the fields and showed him the many rows of pompons growing. "Do you know what these are?" Uncle Hiroshi said. "These things here?"

"Yes. Very valuable," Nephew Tatsuo said. "Plants."

"Do you know when these plants grow up and flower, we eat?" Uncle Hiroshi said.

Nephew Tatsuo nodded. "Yes," he said, "I knew that."

"All right. Uncle Hiroshi will give you six rows of pompons," Uncle Hiroshi said. "You own these six rows. You take care of them. Make them grow and flower like your uncles'."

—Toshio Mori, "The Six Rows of Pompons"

1. (A) (B) (C) (D)
2. (A) (B) (C) (D)

Mark the best answer for questions 1–2.

1. Which adjectives BEST describe Uncle Hiroshi?

- A. wise and patient
- B. old-fashioned and determined
- C. generous but misguided
- D. well-meaning but powerless

2. Why do you think Uncle Hiroshi gave Tatsuo the rows of pompons?

- A. He wants to punish Tatsuo for causing so much difficulty.
- B. He wants to help Tatsuo learn to appreciate the beauty of flowers.
- C. He wants Tatsuo to earn money to help support the family.
- D. He wants Tatsuo to become more mature and responsible.